

May 6, 2019

NO-COST HEPATITIS C TESTS AND EDUCATION ON MAY 17



Contact:

Maggie Hall, PIO

Margarita.Hall@FLHealth.gov

(727) 824-6908 (media only)



The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) is providing no-cost rapid hepatitis C testing and education at two of its centers on **Friday, May 17** to observe May as [National Hepatitis Awareness Month](#).

No-cost rapid hepatitis tests will be provided at these locations on May 17:

- **8 a.m. to noon at the Clearwater center**, 310 N. Myrtle Ave.
- **8 a.m. to noon at the St. Petersburg center**, 205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N.

It's especially important for Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, and those who share needles to know their hepatitis C status because it can reside in the body without symptoms for decades. Knowing one's status can mean an opportunity for early treatment before symptoms flare up.

The term "hepatitis" means an inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis A, B and C are the most common form of viral hepatitis in the United States. These viruses can have similar symptoms, but different ways of being transmitted:

- **Hepatitis A** is a very contagious live infection that's usually spread when someone comes in contact with the feces of an infected person. For information about hepatitis A, go to <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/> and click on the yellow alert at the top of the page. An effective vaccine is available to prevent the spread of hepatitis A. Staff will be providing information about the vaccine that is being offered for a limited time at DOH-Pinellas clinics as part of the screening events in Clearwater and St. Petersburg.
- **Hepatitis B** spreads via bodily fluids from one person to another. Sex and contact with contaminated blood can pass it on. There is a vaccine to prevent hepatitis B. Two-thirds of people with hepatitis B don't know they are infected.
- **Hepatitis C** spreads when blood from a person with the infection enters another person's body. Sharing needles is a possible mode of transmission. Baby Boomers—older adults born between 1945 and 1965—have the highest hepatitis C rates among age groups over 30. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that Baby Boomers get tested for hepatitis C at least once in their lifetime.

The CDC has an online tool to help adults determine their hepatitis risk. Go to <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/riskassessment/index.htm> to take the quiz.

For information on DOH-Pinellas' Hepatitis Program, go to <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/infectious-disease-services/hepatitis/index.html> or call (727) 824-6932. DOH-Pinellas provides hepatitis vaccines at its clinics.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/index.html>. Follow us on Twitter [@HealthyPinellas](#).

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About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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